1991

UNICEF
Annual Report Supplement

The April–May 1991 Executive Board Session

Promises to keep

The promises made to children in 1990 and 1991 provide a framework for action which will challenge the resources of UNICEF and its partners well into the next century.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (decision 1991/9) was opened for signature in January 1990, and became international law less than eight months later (2 September 1990). The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand (5-9 March 1990), adopted recommendations for the rapid expansion of early child development, basic education and literacy. On 30 September 1990, these and other promises to children intersected at the World Summit for Children. This historic event drew on UNICEF goals and strategies for the 1990s (E/ICEF/1990/L.5) as the basis for a landmark Declaration and Plan of Action, which went beyond lofty principles to set 27 very specific goals, with measurable targets and deadlines for their achievement (E/ICEF/1991/12).

The major goals for the year 2000 include:

- the reduction of 1990 under-five mortality rates by one third or to a level of 70 per 1,000 live births, whichever is the greater reduction;
- the reduction of maternal mortality rates by one half of 1990 levels;
- the reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-five children by one half of 1990 levels;
- universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;
- universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school age children;
- the reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female illiteracy;
- protection for children in especially difficult circumstances, particularly in situations of armed conflict.

UNICEF estimates that an additional US$20 billion a year will be needed during the present decade to achieve those goals, but the stakes are also high. The fulfilment of the promises made at the Summit would save the lives of some 50 million children and 1.5 million women during this period, and protect the health and well-being of many millions more.

UNICEF 1849/86 Sprague

UNICEF 4241/89 Simmons

"Never before in history has the programme of a social movement been so clearly and definitively enumerated as is the agenda for children for the decade of the 1990s", commented UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant in his opening remarks to the Executive Board. "Never before in modern history has the world's political climate been so conducive to constructive, cooperative action for social benefit" (E/ICEF/1991/CRP.12).

TARGETS ACHIEVED

A welcome accompaniment to the promises for children in 1990/1991 was the confirmation that 1990 targets for universal child immunization (UCI) had been achieved – a result which supports the UNICEF contention that promises made to the world's children can be kept when national policies, political commitment and focused international support are well targeted (E/ICEF/1991/L.8 and Add.1).

OBJECTIVES ENDORSED

The forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Summit goals and recommendations, and asked the Secretary-General to report on their implementation in 1992. The Secretary-General has indicated that he will rely on UNICEF to assist in the preparation of this report.

Mr. Grant told delegates that UNICEF had a unique dual responsibility within this framework for action: "Our principal concern is to focus on the goals and strategies adopted by the Board in 1990, facilitating the work of others – primarily developing countries themselves – in interventions for the benefit of children. As the world's lead agency for children, we are also called upon to play a special role within the international community as lead advocate, facilitator and collaborator."

SUCCESS IN PERSPECTIVE

Mr. Grant said that although 1990 had been a year of solid achievements, the situation of many children in the developing world had in fact deteriorated.

"A broad and durable solution has not yet been found to the external debt crisis which continues to undermine economic recovery and social progress in Latin America and Africa", he said. "And while the more dynamic East Asian countries continue their sustained economic growth and social progress, South Asia remains the region with the highest concentration of poverty and accompanying ills."

In his report, 'Promises to keep' (E/ICEF/1991/2, Part I), Mr. Grant also cautioned that the Persian Gulf crisis had obscured an emerging disaster in Africa, on a scale comparable to that of 1984-1985. "Sub-Saharan Africa continues to reel under the effects of economic decline, natural disasters, civil strife and the ravages of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in many countries", he said. In his 'Overview of actions for children in 1990' (E/ICEF/1991/2, Part II), Mr. Grant said that Africa was the only region in the world where the number of child deaths was increasing.

Mr. Grant said that the situation between Iraq and Kuwait had also shifted attention away from considerable recent progress for children in the Gulf, and had had a devastating impact beyond the region, particularly in oil-importing developing countries.

AFRICA

Many delegations expressed support for the priority UNICEF has given to the needs of African children. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of total UNICEF programme expenditures increased from 21 per cent in the period 1970-1979 to 37 per cent in 1990, and Mr. Grant said he hoped that the donor community would show a similar commitment. He welcomed an announcement that the Government of the Netherlands would increase its assistance to Africa in the 1990s by 50 per cent.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

(Decision 1991/20)

While some delegations cautioned UNICEF against diverting scarce development resources to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, others felt the organization was not doing enough to help. There is concern that in the absence of social safety nets, children will suffer uncommon hardship as these countries make the transition to market economies. Mr. Grant said he felt Board decision 1990/5 (E/ICEF/1990/13) remained valid for the work of UNICEF, although he invited the Board's further guidance in the context of emergency responses. During 1990, UNICEF conducted workshops and promoted analytical studies on issues affecting children in both Central and Eastern Europe. The organization also provided emergency support for children in Romania and supplied Bulgaria with a very small quantity of emergency vaccines.

CHILD RIGHTS

Mr. Grant described the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the most "enduring" of the promises made to children in 1990. He said that although full implementation would take a long time, particularly in developing countries, the Convention's norms and standards were now firmly established among the guiding principles of human development.

Virtually all delegations referred to the Convention. Bolivia, the Holy See, Mongolia, Morocco, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and the NGO Committee noted the linkage between the Convention, which has established the legal framework for progress, and the Summit Plan of Action, which provides the strategy for implementation.

China, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom reported that they were in the final stages of ratifying the Convention, and Bolivia, Colombia, Pakistan, Romania,

Universal Child Immunization

Immunization coverage in developing countries increased more than fourfold from less than 20 per cent in 1981 to reach 80 per cent – the UCI target – by 1990 (E/ICEF/1991/L.8 and Add.1). Although final performance figures are not yet available, preliminary data from key countries suggests that some 60 developing countries in 1990 will have achieved 80 per cent coverage for three doses each of DPT and polio, and more than 80 per cent for BCG. Measles coverage in the range of 75 to 80 per cent has been constrained by the fact that reporting is restricted to vaccinations of infants aged between 9 and 12 months. Surveys have shown higher coverage in many countries among children aged up to 18 months.

It is expected that some 60 countries will have achieved their UCI goals in 1990 and that another 15 to 20 will achieve the target for all antigens except measles. At these levels of coverage, UCI is preventing an estimated 3 million deaths from measles, neonatal tetanus and whooping cough a year, as well as 400,000 cases of poliomyelitis. The delegations of Angola, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Liberia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, the United States, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe all commended the immunization 'Initiative'.

The potential for new and improved vaccines to increase the effectiveness of UCI was the subject of a joint WHO/UNICEF meeting held in New York in September 1990 (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.31), and an initiative to help developing countries procure their own vaccines was also submitted to the Board (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41).

The success of the global immunization programme has given many leaders confidence to set more ambitious goals for the decade, and with the demonstrated capacity of the programme to reach about 100 million infants each year, several countries have started to introduce other interventions at the time of vaccination. These include vitamin A supplements and, where possible, additional vaccines.

READEX FICHE

AIDS

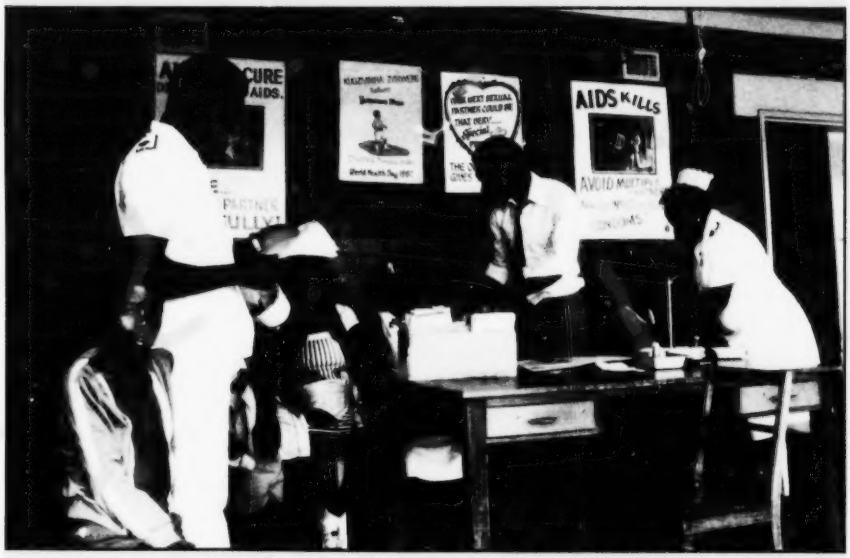
More than 10 million infants will have been infected with the AIDS virus by the year 2000, according to WHO projections. WHO estimates globally there have been 400,000 cases of AIDS among infants and children under age five since the pandemic was first recognized about 10 years ago, with 90 per cent of the victims in sub-Saharan Africa. In some African cities, HIV infection in the adult population aged 15 to 49 years has risen to more than 25 per cent.

Many delegations, including those of Finland, Germany, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zimbabwe, expressed concern at the impact of AIDS on children in many parts of the world and its potential to undermine gains in child survival. Increasing numbers of children can be expected to have HIV-related symptoms which resemble common child health problems but which do not respond to standard treatments. Most children born HIV-infected die by the age of two years, and nearly all die by the age of five.

The delegate of Zimbabwe noted that 25 per cent of the people dying from AIDS in Africa are children under the age of four, and that 50 per cent of the remainder are young parents. One rapidly growing phenomenon associated with the virus in Africa is the number of AIDS orphans. UNICEF supports a consortium of NGOs in Uganda which is evaluating various models of orphan care in areas where traditional extended family structures are being overwhelmed by the numbers of children in need.

While the most critical problems are in Africa, the AIDS situation in the Caribbean is also serious and the number of HIV infections in East and South-east Asia is also growing.

UNICEF works closely with the WHO Global Programme on AIDS. AIDS prevention and education are the main focus of UNICEF efforts in this area.



UNICEF 3148/89/Watson

Spain and the USSR said that they had made, or were making, major revisions of national laws in keeping with its principles. Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda noted the adoption of an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as a complement to the international Convention.

THE GIRL CHILD

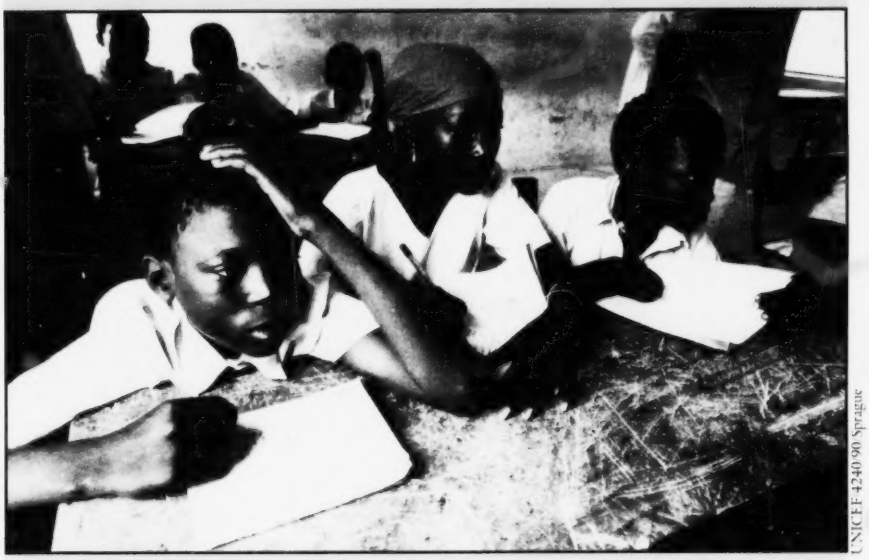
A close focus on the role of the girl child in the organization's programming has become increasingly evident (E/ICEF/1991/L.5). The Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges signatories to correct gender biases, and the World Summit made explicit commitments to strengthen the role and status of women, beginning with the needs of the girl child.

Several delegations, including Bangladesh, China, the Côte d' Ivoire, Morocco and Nigeria, underscored the importance of education as the foundation for improving the status of young girls and women. Many delegations, including Barbados, Egypt, India, Peru, Spain, Sri Lanka and Thailand, urged UNICEF to promote the roles of women in decision-making, development planning, implementation and management. They also asked that an effort be made to change the perception that women were passive beneficiaries of services.

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

Delegations, including Cameroon, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, drew attention to the negative impact of the global financial crisis on children throughout the developing world. A number of them, including Nigeria, Sweden, Zimbabwe and the National Committees, urged UNICEF to continue its advocacy for 'adjustment with a human face'.

Mr. Grant said UNICEF would continue to encourage sustainable development, placing its emphasis on poverty alleviation and the human dimensions of development. He agreed with delegations that this would require better collection, analysis and use of data in policy design, together with more informed use of social indicators for monitoring poverty.



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UNICEF 4133/90 Rotner

ENVIRONMENT

UNICEF participation in programmes to counter environmental degradation has expanded globally and at national level in the past year. Many delegates noted the relationship between environmental protection and child health and survival, but Japan cautioned UNICEF against broadening its involvement with issues that were dealt with in other forums. Mr. Grant responded that the environment issue affected everybody, although he did not foresee an expansion of UNICEF involvement in this area at the expense of its other programmes.

"They are mutually supportive", he said. "I believe successful child survival/child spacing programmes, basic education, water supply and sanitation, household food security, appropriate technology and social forestry programmes, and related advocacy, will all contribute to a better environment for a child to grow up in."

FAMILY PLANNING

A number of delegations urged UNICEF to pay increased attention to family planning and to give higher priority to the subject in all aspects of its programme planning, advocacy and implementation. Pointing to the impact of high population growth rates on the environment and on the quality of life, delegations said there was a need for close UNICEF collaboration with UNFPA and WHO on the family planning issue. Among delegations which mentioned family planning were: Australia, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, the Holy See, India, Nigeria, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States.

PROGRAMME SPENDING

In 1990, UNICEF cooperated in programmes in 127 countries and territories, the majority of which were in Africa (44), followed by the Americas and the Caribbean (35), Asia (34) and the Middle East and North Africa (14).

Programme expenditure for the year totalled US$584 million, of which US$319 million was from general resources and US$265 million from supplementary funds. Asia received US$233 million (40 per cent), Africa US$216 million (37 per cent), the Americas and the Caribbean US$58 million (10 per cent), the Middle East and North Africa US$57 million (10 per cent) and interregional – including Central and Eastern Europe – US$20 million (3 per cent).

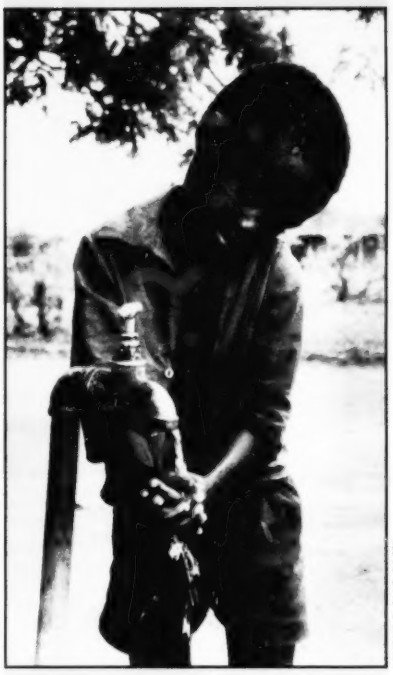
GREETING CARDS AND RELATED OPERATIONS

With a network of National Committees, field offices and participating NGOs in 145 countries, GCO sales and income for UNICEF continue to rise.

Sales in 1989/1990 grew by 13 million to 152 million cards, and the financial contribution to UNICEF general resources rose by US$18.5 million to US$61.7 million for the season.

PRIORITIES

Programme spending on health increased in dollar terms and in proportion to spending in other sectors, from US$203 million (40 per cent) in 1989 to US$250 million (43 per cent) in 1990. Spending on water supply and sanitation increased over the same period by US$6 million to US$82 million or 14 per cent of the total. Spending on education and young child development increased from US$37 million (7 per cent) in 1989 to US$57 million (10 per cent) in 1990. Child nutrition claimed 5 per cent (US$29 million) and emergencies 8 per cent (US$49 million).



UNICEF 3193/89/Watson

Emergencies

In 1990, UNICEF provided emergency assistance to 29 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa (E/ICEF/1991/11). These responses to natural disasters, epidemics and man-made crises attracted funds totalling US$35.9 million and reflect a trend towards ever more numerous and complex emergency situations affecting ever-larger numbers of women and children.

The main source of funding for emergencies was special contributions in response to needs outlined in appeals by the United Nations Secretary-General. They were directed towards humanitarian assistance for the victims of drought, famine and civil conflict in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, southern Africa, Liberia, and the affected neighbouring countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, and in countries affected by the situation between Iraq and Kuwait – Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. In each of these countries, the emergencies were caused by armed conflict or its aftermath, and in the Horn of Africa and Angola, the civil strife was compounded by drought.

A number of delegations said that the complexity of present-day emergencies demanded closely coordinated responses by agencies of the United Nations system according to their various areas of expertise. One delegation described the emergency created by a cholera epidemic, in which oral rehydration salts had been a major factor in the control of mortality (decision 1991/5). Two other delegations appealed for medical equipment and other assistance for women and children affected by the nuclear accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union (decision 1991/21).

UNICEF AND PARTNERS

A number of delegates recognized the need to build on, or to expand, the cooperation between Governments and other social sectors, including NGOs, the media, religious leaders, parliamentarians, and artists and intellectuals. Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States emphasized the importance of NGOs at the grass-roots level of development, and the delegations of Bangladesh, Barbados, India, Liberia, Romania and Viet Nam underlined the value of NGOs as a supplement to Governments' efforts. Mr. Grant added: "If we are to continue to score the kinds of successes we have recently had – the achievement of our UCI goals, the ratification of the Convention, and the adoption of the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action – the Grand Alliance must be sustained, further strengthened and enlarged."

The Chairperson of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF, Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, M.P., said that while much had been achieved over the previous two-year period, she was quite pessimistic about some elements of the future.

Ms. Rehn told the Executive Board that the World Summit was just the beginning of the work ahead, and she was not as optimistic as the UNICEF secretariat that national leaders would follow through on their commitments.

"We have seen in the past few months too many examples of countries and leaders, who in official declarations say they will put children first and then continue with policies actually leading to a worsening of the situation of children and women", she said.

Ms. Rehn also observed that the economic climate was "hardening". She said budgets were being cut and there was an unwillingness to discuss seriously a radical redirection of financial resources to the most vulnerable groups in developing countries.

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Some delegations were appreciative of improvements made in the substance and budget presentation of documents (E/ICEF/1991/AB/L.10 and E/ICEF/1991/AB/L.1 and Add.1), but many others felt that their presentation could be more 'user-friendly'. The secretariat

UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

The Child-to-Child Trust of the United Kingdom received the 1991 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award for its innovative work in mobilizing communities, through its children, to promote primary health care (PHC) worldwide.

The organization, which is co-sponsored by the Institute of Education and the Institute of Child Health of the University of London, provides health information in about 17 languages to health workers, teachers and Governments in more than 60 countries.

The Child-to-Child Trust was established in 1978 in preparation for the International Year of the Child (1979). Its founders were inspired by the role older children normally play in the care of younger siblings. They felt that if big brothers and sisters could learn the whys and wherefores of health, welfare and development at school, they would take that information home with them and be an important entry-point for PHC for the entire family. This 'child-power' approach has in fact proved to be an effective means of disseminating knowledge of health care and has helped break down barriers between health workers and families, schoolteachers and community leaders. Over the past decade, the Child-to-Child Trust has extended its reach with teaching methods and formats which can be used in formal and non-formal settings, ranging from teachers' colleges to programmes for street children. The approach has needed only modest resources and has become self-sustaining in scores of developing countries.

The UNICEF Maurice Pate Award is presented annually in memory of the first UNICEF Executive Director. It is awarded for exemplary leadership and contributions to the survival, development and protection of children.

said it would be happy to work with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on a revision of the format for the next budget biennium. The Committee on Administration and Finance asked the secretariat to carry out an in-depth analysis of the format in close cooperation with ACABQ and a reference group nominated by the Officers of the Executive Board in time for the 1992 session. This report is to include specific proposals to improve the clarity and transparency of budget documents and of all global funds administered at headquarters (decision 1991/30).

The Executive Board approved, among other things, the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1990-1991 in the amount of US$327,172,600 (decision 1991/28); and agreed to maintain the current structure of the Division of Information and the Division of Public Affairs pending a review in the context of the medium-term plan. The Board also approved budget estimates for the biennium 1992-1993 in the amount of US$390,954,307 (decision 1991/29).

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The Executive Board approved the medium-term plan as a framework for projections for 1991-1994 (decision 1991/24) together with two decisions regarding the income and financial reports of GCO (decisions 1991/35 and 1991/36).

WORDS OF CAUTION

During the review of the medium-term plan (E/ICEF/1991/3) by the Committee on Administration and Finance, several delegations expressed satisfaction with income growth for 1990, while others cautioned UNICEF against being too optimistic in its income forecasts, given the rather gloomy outlook for the world economy. In complimenting GCO on its performance and financial report for the 1989 season (E/ICEF/1991/AB/L.5), its provisional 1990 report (E/ICEF/1991/AB/L.4) and its 1991 work plan and proposed budget (E/ICEF/1991/AB/L.6), a number of delegations also noted the impact which unfavourable currency exchange fluctuations could have on future performance.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

In response to a report entitled 'UNICEF external relations: a review' (E/ICEF/1991/L.4), several delegations commended the steps taken to make the external relations function more effective and integral to UNICEF, noting particularly the strengthening of the Geneva office and improved support for UNICEF National Committees. While recognizing that advocacy and social mobilization activities contribute significantly to increasing awareness of and support for actions on behalf of children, some delegations urged that care be taken not to compromise programme delivery.

OTHER DECISIONS

The Board also:

- asked the Executive Director to prepare a cost-effective long-term office space strategy for UNICEF headquarters, to be presented in 1992 (1991/27);
- decided to consider at its 1992 session the need to review UNICEF administrative and management structure (1991/31);
- asked the secretariat to expand its recruitment from developing countries for international professional posts (1991/33); and
- decided that the draft model Basic Cooperation Agreement would be thoroughly discussed at the 1992 session (1991/34).

The Board also noted a series of UNICEF financial reports (1991/25); the financial report of the World Summit for Children and Summit-related activities (1991/26); and a report on the composition of all international professional core staff and international project staff (1991/32). □

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1 August 1990 to 31 July 1991

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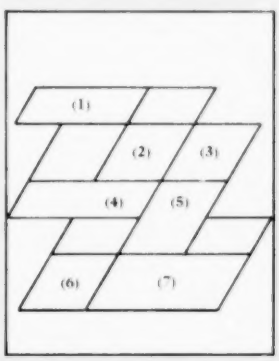

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(3) UNICEF/3249/89/Wright
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(5) UNICEF/4225/90/Sprague
(6) UNICEF/3397/89/Sprague
(7) UNICEF/3163/88/Bregnard

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BCG	antituberculosis vaccine
DPT	diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine
GCO	Greeting Card Operation
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	non-governmental organization
PHC	primary health care
UCI	universal child immunization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

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